

SENATE BILL REPORT

2ESSCR 8407

As Passed Senate, March 11, 2008

Brief Description: Addressing liquor laws.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research & Development (originally sponsored by Senators Kohl-Welles, Clements, Keiser and Parlette).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce, Research & Development: 3/09/07 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 4/03/07, 47-0; 3/11/08, 32-17.

Passed House: 3/12/08, 40-27.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 8407 be substituted therefor, and the substitute concurrent resolution do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Keiser, Vice Chair; Clements, Ranking Minority Member; Franklin, Holmquist, Murray and Prentice.

Staff: Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

Background: The Liquor Control Board (LCB) is responsible for overseeing the manufacture, sale, and distribution of spirits, beer, and wine in this state. The statutes that the LCB enforces was originally passed in 1933. The statutes have been amended over the years to accommodate certain issues raised by different interest groups.

Summary of Second Engrossed Substitute Bill: A joint select committee on beer and wine regulation is established. The committee must review laws relating to the manufacture, distribution, and sale of beer and wine to determine whether those laws should be continued in their present form or changed to decrease the number of bills introduced in the Legislature each year.

The committee consists of eight members including the chair and ranking minority members of the Senate Labor, Commerce, Research and Development Committee and the House Commerce and Labor Committee. The leaders of the two largest caucuses in the Senate and House must each appoint one member of their respective caucus.

The joint select committee is to report its findings and recommendations to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2008.

Appropriation: None.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: Yes.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (from 2007): PRO: There is support for coming up with a general overarching philosophy that eliminates the piecemeal approach to amending the law that we have seen for years. The LCB needs more flexibility in interpreting and enforcing laws. The question that should be asked is whether the premise upon which the tied house laws are based is still relevant today. Many people think it is not. The laws are arcane and need to be updated. Many of the current laws are an impediment to the economic development of the state wine industry and need to be reviewed. The LCB is working on some recommendations regarding the tied house laws and will have those ready by the time this committee begins to meet, and it would be happy to share those recommendations and work with the committee.

Persons Testifying (from 2007): PRO: Rick Garza, LCB; Jim Halstrom, Northwest Racing; Becky Bogard, Washington State Sports and Entertainment Facilities Operators Association; Michael Transue, Washington Restaurant Association; Jean Leonard, Washington Wine Institute; Carrie Tellefson, Washington Food Industry Association; Ron Main, Beer and Wine Wholesalers.